

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 CPR-02 INR-10 SSO-00 INRE-00

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FOR NEA/PAB, COON FROM CHARGE

REF: A) KABUL 4781; B) KABUL 5170; C) KABUL 4314; D) KABUL

3511

E.O. 71652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDIP, AF, US

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF NEW AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE TRANSMITS A REQUEST BY THE AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR AGREEMENT TO THE APPOINTMENT OF NUR AHMAD NUR, PRESENTLY INTERIOR MINISTER, AS AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. WE RECOMMEND IT BE GRANTED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JUNE 25, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, SHAH MOHAMMAD DOSTN CALLED ME TO THIS OFFICE AND HANDED ME A DIPLOMATIC NOTE REQUESTING AGREEMENT FOR NUR AHMAD NUR TO BE AFGHAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. THE NOTE WAS IN DARI (PERSIAN), AND INCLUDED BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON THE NOMINEE. THESE ARE BEING POUCED TO THE DEPARTMENT (KABUL A-58), TOGETHER WITH OUR ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

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3. THE REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT, AS WELL AS NUR'S NOMINATION CAME AS A SURPRISE TO US. TWO WEEKS AGO, FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN CAUTIONED AMBASSADOR ELIOT AND ME THAT, "IT MAY BE SOMETIME BEFORE A SELECTION IS MADE," (SEE REFTEL A). FROM THAT REMARK, I ESTIMATED THAT A NOMINATION MIGHT NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE LATE JULY AT THE EARLIEST. ALSO, WE HAD RECEIVED A DISTURBING REPORT THAT AN EX-MINISTER NAMED BAKHTARI, A PERSON FOR WHOM WE HAD

LITTLE RESPECT, WAS CONSIDERED FOR THE POST. THUS, WE WERE NOT EXPECTING THRE AGREEMENT REQUEST TO COME SO SOON NOR THAT THE NEW INTERIOR MINISTER WOULD BE THE PERSON CHOSEN.

4. IN ASSESSING THE AFGHAN GOVT'S ACTION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROMPT ACTION TAKEN AND THE SELECTION OF NUR AHMAD NUR REFLECT MAINLY THE OUTCOME OF A POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TARAKI AND BABRAK FACTIONS OF THE RULING DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S PARTY. AS REFTEL B REPORTS, BABRAK AND HIS KEY SUPPORTERS ARE NOW APPARENTLY BEING REMOVED FROM THEIR POSITIONS OF POWER IN KABUL AND BEING APPOINTED TO AMBASSADORSHIPS ABROAD WHERE THEY WILL BE LESS OF A DOMESTIC THREAT TO THE TARAKI REGIME. THAT THIS IS THE MAJOR CONSIDERATION BEHIND NUR AHMAD NUR'S NOMINATION IS underscored BY HIS KNOWING LITTLE ENGLISH.

5. IN DISCUSSING THE AGREEMENT MATTER, DEPFONMIN DOST MADE APOINT TOO, OF SAYING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF THE DEPARTMENT COULD TAKE EXPEDITIOUS ACTION TO ISSUE THE AGREEMENT. HE DID NOT SAY WHY QUICK ACTION WAS DESIRED, BUT WE SURMISE THAT THE TARAKI FACTION IS NERVOUS THAT UNTIL THEY CAN REMOVE FROM AFGHANISTAN THE IMPORTANT LEADERS OF THE BABRAK FACTION, THIS RIVAL GROUP WILL CONTINUE TO REPRESENT A POTENTIAL THREAT TO DISPLACE THE NOW ASCENDANT TARKI FACTION.

6. VIEWED FROM THE CONTEXT OF U.S. INTERESTS, I URGE THAT AGREEMENT BE GIVEN TO NUR AND THAT IT BE DONE PROMPTLY. AS AMBASSADOR  
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ELIOT CAN AFFIRM, NUR IS ONE OF THE MORE IMPRESSIVE INDIVIDUALS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT (SEE REFTEL C). THIS OPINION IS SHARED BY OTHER AMBASSADORS HERE WHO HAVE MET HIM. BRITISH AMBASSADOR CROOK HAS TOLD US HE FOUND NUR TO BE THE MOST IMPOSING OF THE CABINET MINISTERS, DESCRIBING HIM AS, "URBANE OF MANNER, WITH A STRONG PERSONALITY, CONSIDERABLE CHARM, AND AN EVIDANT SENSE OF HUMOR." IN THE JUDGMENT ALSO OF AMBASSADOR CROOK, AND SOME OTHER DIPLOMATS HERE, NUR MAY WELL HAVE THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES TO BECOME A CHIEF OF STATE OF AFGHANISTAN. THUS, IN SOME WAYS, WE CAN FEEL PLEASE THAT NUR HAS BEEN NOMINATED AS AMBADDADOR TO WASHINGTON.

7. NUR'S WEAK KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH IS, OF COURSE, A HANDICAP THOUGH HE SEEKS TO UNDESTAND IT BETTER THAN SPEAK IT. FOR SOMETIME, HE WILL HAVE TO RELY ON INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS, AND THUS THERE IS A RISK HE WILL NOT HAVE A PROPER SENSITIVITY TO THE NUANCES OR THE REALITIES OF OUR RELATIONS. SINCE HE ALSO IS APPARENTLY BEING SENT INTO POLITICAL EXILE (A COMMON PRACTICE BY PREVIOUS AFGHAN REGIMES) AND OSTENSIBLY DOES NOT HAVE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE TARAKI FACTION, IMPORTANT MATTERS BEARING ON U.S./AFGHAN RELATIONS WILL LIKELY BE CHANNELED THROUGH OUR EMBASSY HERE RATHER THAN THEIR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. NEVERTHELESS,

DESPITE THESE WEAKNESSES, I SEE NOTHING TO BE GAINED AND MUCH TO BE LOST WERE THE DEPARTMENT TO REFUSE ITS AGREEMENT. MY STRONG RECOMMENDATION IS THEREFORE THAT AGREEMENT SHOULD BE GRANTED.

8. I ALSO SEE NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY OUR DELIBERATELY DELAYING ITS ISSUANCE. WERE WE TO BE PERCEIVED AS DOING SO, IT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO AGGRAVATE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. I THEREFORE HOPE THAT THE NECESSARY ACTION CAN BE TAKEN SOON.

9. PLEASE SHARE THIS AMBASSADOR DUBS AND AMBASSADOR ELIOT.AMSTUTZ

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## Message Attributes

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